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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants:	Michael J. LEMON et al.	§	Confirmation No.:	8359
Serial No.:	09/862,612	§	Group Art Unit:	2176
Filed:	05/23/2001	§	Examiner:	R. Stevens
For:	Lightweight Dynamic Service Conversation Controller	§	Docket No.:	10012649-1

APPEAL BRIEF

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Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
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Date: September 30, 2005

Sir:

Appellants hereby submit this Appeal Brief in connection with the above-identified application. A Notice of Appeal was filed via facsimile on August 3, 2005.

10/04/2005 MBINAS 00000017 082025 09862612
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I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is the Hewlett-Packard Development Company (HPDC), a Texas Limited Partnership, having its principal place of business in Houston, Texas. HPDC is a wholly owned affiliate of Hewlett-Packard Company (HPC). The Assignment from the inventors to HPC was recorded on January 18, 2002, at Reel/Frame 012536/0140. The assignment of assignor's interest document was recorded on September 30, 2003, at Reel/Frame 014061/0492.

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II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants are unaware of any related appeals or interferences.

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III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Originally filed claims: 1-20.
Claim cancellations: 6.
Added claims: 21 and 22.
Presently pending claims: 1-5 and 7-22.
Presently appealed claims: 1-5 and 7-22.

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IV. STATUS OF THE AMENDMENTS

No claims were amended after the final Office action dated May 23, 2005.

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V. SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

In accordance with at least one embodiment, a method for implementing a conversation between a client and a service on a conversation controller comprises various actions performed by the conversation controller. Such actions comprise, for example, receiving a conversation information from the service. The conversation information specifies a structure of conversations supported by the service. The actions may also comprise receiving a message on behalf of the service, determining a current state of the conversation, using the received conversation information to determine valid input document types for the current state, verifying whether the message is of one of the valid input document types for the current state, and dispatching the message to appropriate service entry points provided by the service, until the service produces an output document of a valid output document type. See e.g., Appellants' disclosure pages 3-10 and Figures 1-6.

In accordance with another embodiment, a conversation controller implements a conversation between a client and a service. The conversation controller comprises a processor, an incoming context handler, an interaction handler, and a dispatch handler. The incoming context handler receives a message on behalf of the service and is capable of parsing the message and extracting a document type of the message. The interaction handler is capable of identifying a current state and the document type of the message and validates the document type based on a conversation specification received from the service. The dispatch handler parses the conversation specification and forwards the message to service entry points of the service. See e.g., Appellants' disclosure pages 3-10 and Figures 1-6.

In accordance with yet another embodiment, a computer readable medium comprises instructions for implementing a conversation between a client and a service. The instructions comprise receiving a conversation specification from the service, receiving a message on behalf of the service, determining a current state of the conversation, using the conversation specification, determining valid input document types for the current state, verifying whether the message is of one of

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the valid input document types for the current state, and dispatching the message to appropriate service entry points of the service, until the service produces an output document of a valid output document type. The conversation specification specifying a structure of conversations supported by the service. See e.g., Appellants' disclosure pages 3-10 and Figures 1-6.

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**VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION/OBJECTION
TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL**

Whether claims 1, 4-5, 7-18, and 21-22 are obvious (35 U.S.C. § 103) over Stewart (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0161688) in view of Chiang (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2004/0221292).

Whether claims 2-3 and 19-20 are obvious over Stewart in view of Chiang and LeMay ("Sams Teach Yourself Java 2 in 21 Days").

Whether Figure 1 is objectionable.

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VII. ARGUMENT

A. Overview of Stewart

Stewart is generally directed to "an enterprise wide electronic commerce system [that] allows trading partners to act as participants in a complex trading process." Abstract. The specifics of how Stewart's system works are largely irrelevant other than those specifics discussed below regarding Appellants' claims.

B. Claims 1, 4-5, 7-18, and 21-22

1. Claims 1, 4-5, 7-10, and 21

Appellants have grouped these claims together for purposes of this appeal. However, that these claims have been grouped together should not be used to construe the scope of the claims or the limitations contained therein. Differences in scope and limitation meaning may exist apart from the issues raised in this appeal. Appellants select independent claim 1 as representative of this group.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting claim 1 for any or all of the following reasons. First, claim 1 requires "the conversation controller verifying whether the message is of one of the valid input document types for the current state." For this limitation, the Examiner turned to paragraph [0157] of Stewart, which, according to the Final Office Action of May 23, 2005, states: "knows how to handle the type of message received." Paragraph [0157] of Stewart does not include the language quoted by the Examiner. Instead, paragraph [0157] states:

[0157] While collaborative commerce is driven by the desire to automate and streamline e-business processes, one can not completely eliminate the ability to involve humans in the execution of e-business processes. Unlike other B2B platforms, the invention's process capabilities provide the ability to define and direct e-business process exceptions to human users for resolution. The combination of a collaboration server and a workflow server in one collaboration system also delivers unparalleled flexibility to drive and integrate cross-enterprise collaborative processes, enterprise applications, and transactions on either side of the firewall using a single process technology.

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Paragraph [0157] appears to be completely irrelevant to the subject matter of claim 1. Applicants, however, did find a reference to handling message types in paragraph [0151] of Stewart. "In this approach, each message can then be routed to the specific Decoder that knows exactly how to handle the type of message being received." Stewart, para. [0151]. That sentence says nothing about "a current state" and, for at least that reason, certainly cannot be said to read on the limitation of "verifying whether the message is of one of the valid input document types for the current state." The other art of record is also deficient in this regard. For at least this reason, claim 1 and all claims dependent thereon are allowable over the art of record.

Claim 1 is patentable for an additional reason as well. As amended, claim 1 specifies that "the conversation controller receiving a conversation information from the service, the conversation information specifying a structure of conversations supported by the service." None of the art of record appears to teach or even suggest this limitation. For this additional reason, claim 1 and all claims dependent thereon are allowable over the art of record.

Claim 1 has also been amended to require that "the conversation controller use[s] the received conversation information to determine valid input document types for the current state." Applicants do not find this limitation in any of the art of record. For this additional reason, Applicants submit that claim 1 and all claims dependent thereon are allowable over the art of record.

In response to a previous § 101 rejection, Appellants amended claim 1 to specify that a "conversation controller" performs the recited actions. The Examiner has since withdrawn the § 101 rejections, but now seems confused about the nature of that prior amendment. In the final Office action and apparently in response to the obviousness issues, the Examiner stated:

Additionally, the Office notes that providing a name for an element such as a software module (or dividing up tasks to be performed by a certain named module) does not impart patentability. The issue is whether the function(s) performed by a named module (and not the Applicant-assigned name of the module) are shown to exist in the prior art.

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Final Office action page 18. Without regard to the merits of the Examiner's belief regarding whether providing a descriptive label for a claim limitation can impart patentability over the prior art, for the record the amendments to which the Examiner refers were made to overcome a § 101 rejection, not an art rejection. Thus, the art rejection of claim 1 is in error for at least the reasons stated above regarding the art of record, and the Examiner's reference to the "conversation controller" amendment is irrelevant.

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this claim grouping be reversed, and the claims set for issue.

2. Claims 11-15

Appellants have grouped these claims together for purposes of this appeal. However, that these claims have been grouped together should not be used to construe the scope of the claims or the limitations contained therein. Differences in scope and limitation meaning may exist apart from the issues raised in this appeal. Appellants select independent claim 11 as representative of this group.

Claim 11 requires an interaction handler that "validates the document type based on a conversation specification received from the service." This limitation is simply absent from any of the art of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting claim 11.

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this claim grouping be reversed, and the grouping set for issue.

3. Claims 16-18, and 22

Appellants have grouped these claims together for purposes of this appeal. However, that these claims have been grouped together should not be used to construe the scope of the claims or the limitations contained therein. Differences in scope and limitation meaning may exist apart from the issues raised in this appeal. Appellants select independent claim 16 as representative of this group.

Claim 16 requires "receiving a conversation specification from the service, the conversation specification specifying a structure of conversations supported

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by the service." As explained above, none of the art of record teaches or suggests this limitation in the claimed context. Claim 16 requires "using the conversation specification, determining valid input document types for the current state." This limitation is absent from any of the art of record. For either or both of these reasons, the Examiner erred in rejecting claim 16.

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this claim grouping be reversed, and the grouping set for issue.

C. Claims 2-3 and 19-20

These claims depend from allowable base claims 1 and 16. Appellants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting the claims in this grouping for at least the reasons stated above regarding the respective base claims.

D. Figure 1

The Examiner objected to Figure 1 as having two paths from block 210 but allegedly not being clear as to which path is to be taken. Applicants submit that Figure 1, when read with the associated text from the specification, is clear and needs no amendment in this regard. The specification states that the conversation controller may be implemented either as "stateful" or "stateless." Page 5, lines 22-30. The specification clearly explains that after block 210 execution continues with block 212 or 214 depending on whether the conversation controller is stateful or stateless. "The conversation controller may maintain and track the "state" of the conversation, i.e., implemented as stateful, step 212, or may retrieve the "state" of the conversation form the service, i.e., implemented as stateless, step 214." Page 7, lines 4-6. The Examiner seems troubled that decision block 210 is shown as a rectangle and not a diamond. Final Office Action page 2. Appellants are unaware of an MPEP rule that requires decisions in a flow chart to be shown with a diamond shape, or any particular shape for that matter. Moreover, Appellants' disclosure (text and figures) is clear and the Examiner's objection to the contrary is in error.

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VIII. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Appellants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting all pending claims. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



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IX. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (Previously presented) A method for implementing a conversation between a client and a service on a conversation controller, comprising:
 - the conversation controller receiving a conversation information from the service, the conversation information specifying a structure of conversations supported by the service;
 - the conversation controller receiving a message on behalf of the service;
 - the conversation controller determining a current state of the conversation;
 - the conversation controller using the received conversation information to determine valid input document types for the current state;
 - the conversation controller verifying whether the message is of one of the valid input document types for the current state; and
 - the conversation controller dispatching the message to appropriate service entry points provided by the service, until the service produces an output document of a valid output document type.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein if messages of invalid input documents types are received, further comprising the conversation controller raising exceptions.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein if no valid output document is produced by the service, further comprising the conversation controller raising exceptions.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the conversation controller formatting and returning to the client the output document in a form appropriate to the client.
5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - the conversation controller calculating a new state of the conversation from the valid output document type;

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the conversation controller determining new input document types that are valid in the new state; and
the conversation controller prompting for the new input document types that are valid in the new state.

6. (Cancelled).
7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the conversation controller maintaining a "state" of the conversation.
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the conversation controller retrieving a "state" of the conversation from the service.
9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
the conversation controller calculating a new state of the conversation from the valid output document type; and
the conversation controller invoking client methods that can produce new input documents that are valid in the new state.
10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising the conversation controller sending the new input documents to the service.
11. (Previously presented) A conversation controller that implements a conversation between a client and a service, comprising:
a processor;
an incoming context handler executing on said processor, said incoming context handler receives a message on behalf of the service, wherein the incoming context handler is capable of parsing the message and extracting a document type of the message;
an interaction handler executing on said processor and coupled to the incoming context handler and capable of identifying a current state

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and the document type of the message and validates the document type based on a conversation specification received from the service; and

a dispatch handler executing on said processor, wherein the dispatch handler parses the conversation specification and forwards the message to service entry points of the service.

12. (Original) The conversation controller of claim 11, wherein the interaction handler validates if the document type of the message is valid for the current state.

13. (Original) The conversation controller of claim 11, wherein the interaction handler calculates a new state of the conversation and new valid document types for the new state from a response returned by the service.

14. (Original) The conversation controller of claim 13, further comprising an outgoing content handler capable of constructing an outgoing message that is valid for the new state, wherein the outgoing content handler returns the outgoing message to the client.

15. (Original) The conversation controller of claim 11, further comprising a client interaction handler that dispatches a reply from the service to the client and forwards a response from the client to the service.

16. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium comprising instructions for implementing a conversation between a client and a service, the instructions comprising:

receiving a conversation specification from the service, the conversation specification specifying a structure of conversations supported by the service;

receiving a message on behalf of the service;

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determining a current state of the conversation;
using the conversation specification, determining valid input document types for the current state;
verifying whether the message is of one of the valid input document types for the current state; and
dispatching the message to appropriate service entry points of the service, until the service produces an output document of a valid output document type.

17. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16, further comprising formatting and returning to the client the output document in a form appropriate to the client.
18. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:
calculating a new state of the conversation from the valid output document type;
determining new input document types that are valid in the new state; and
prompting for the new input document types that are valid in the new state.
19. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein if messages of invalid document types are received, further comprising raising exceptions.
20. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein if no valid output document is produced by the service, further comprising raising exceptions.
21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the conversation controller receiving a conversation specification from the client defining the valid interactions with the client.

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22. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein the instructions further comprise receiving a conversation specification from the client defining the valid interactions with the client.

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XI. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.

X. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.



Creation date: 10-03-2005

Indexing Officer: SSAY - SOKIM SAY

Team: ZZZFEP

Dossier: 09740419

Legal Date: 09-30-2005

No.	Doccode	Number of pages
1	AP.B	18

Total number of pages: 18

Remarks:

Order of re-scan issued on